

Action Committee for Transit Questionnaire for Candidates for County Council,
District 4

1) How do we transform the auto-oriented suburbs of District 4 into liveable and walkable communities?

As much, if not most, of District 4 is rural or semi-rural, "walkability" is either already there as an heritage of times prior to the introduction of automobiles, or it would involve planned conversion of rural areas into developed areas. I oppose the latter, and need not concern myself with the former; "it's already there".

Much of District 4 in the developed area is already well-served by transit, for example Glenmont, Aspen Hill, and Kemp Mill are well served by Metrobus and Ride-On buses, and Glenmont and Wheaton are served by MetroRail.

It certainly makes sense to plan for deployment of Bus Rapid Transit or comparable light-rail alternatives (where feasible and appropriate) once the economy permits.

2) Do you support building the light rail Inner Purple Line from Bethesda to New Carrollton, as recommended by County Executive Leggett and the County Council?

Certainly.

3) All bridges over US 29 have been designed so that light rail could run in the median of the highway. There are several possible routes for a connection from White Oak to the Red Line or Purple Line. Would you support detailed study of running a light rail line that connects White Oak to the Metro system and then runs in the median of US 29 to Burtonsville, as a future project after the Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway?

I'd certainly support a fairly detailed preliminary study on the connection to White Oak, but clearly plans should go forward for light rail paralleling US-29.

4) What should the county do to increase transit ridership?

Economic forces seem to have done that already, at least in the summer of 2008. Upgraading existing facilities after catching up on maintenance would be a good idea.

5) County master plans have stated a policy of focusing development around mass transit stations. Much development has occurred that has poor transit access, yet the county's planning also deserves much of the credit for the emergence of Bethesda and the revival of Silver Spring as centers of activity.

A) What smart growth projects near Metro stations do you support even though they have had opposition?

None specifically, nor do I specifically oppose any. In general, I'm not a big supporter of Growth, though generally it's better to have it where there is (or will be) adequate mass transit.

B) Do you support a requirement that development described as "transit-oriented", such as the proposed Germantown and Gaithersburg West master plans, may only be constructed after rail transit access

is built?

I support a requirement that they not call themselves "transit-oriented" until and unless such transit exists.

5) Do you believe that the decision by Governors Ehrlich and O'Malley to build the Intercounty Connector was wise or unwise?

It was long overdue. In any case, it's a done deal.

Thomas Hardman, Feb 28 2009